

previously emptied, and if the incision be brought forwards great care should be taken to avoid its neck. The liquor amnii will escape after the first incision, and if the uterus act, the case may then be left to nature. Some tearing may take place during the passage of the head, but it is generally slight and confined within the limits of the vagina. (Ashwell.) With a view of better avoiding laceration, a crucial incision of the parts has been advised. Before attempting this operation a very careful examination should be made of the os; for I recollect, on two occasions in this hospital, feeling a strong pulsation in the os, as if a large vessel coursed along a part of its rim. Indeed on the first occasion I imagined it was the funis that caused this pulsation, and it was not until after a careful examination, that I was satisfied as to its true source. There is seldom much blood lost. In Dr. Ashwell's and Mr. Tweedie's cases only a few drachms escaped, and the hemorrhage which followed in Mr. Hugh Carnichael's case can not be said to have been altogether derived from the torn parts. If however the section of the parts be succeeded by a profuse hemorrhage; or in the event of its being so long delayed that it might be highly improbable that the uterus would be competent to resume its office, or finally to effect its own delivery, then it should become a matter of deliberation with the practitioner, whether he should further assist by having recourse to the use of the forceps, or to the manual operation of delivering by the feet. As a general principle, it can not be denied that the hand, being of softer texture, and itself endowed with feeling, would be the more gentle instrument; on the contrary, if we suppose the foetal head considerably advanced, or deeply engaged in the cavity of the pelvis, and a sufficient extent of communication to have been made between the uterus and the vagina, it is evident that the application of the forceps might prove a much preferable measure.* If there should be fainting and collapse after the incision, stimulants, such as brandy and ammonia, may be freely given." *Dublin Journal Med. Science*, Sept. 1839.

MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE AND TOXICOLOGY.

45. *Poisoning with Nitrate of Silver, cured by solution of Common Salt.*—A very interesting case of this recently occurred at the Hôpital Saint-Louis. The patient, a man ætat. 21, stated after his recovery, that he had swallowed, an ounce of the nitrate of silver in solution. This quantity was probably exaggerated, nevertheless he must have swallowed a large quantity from the extreme violence of the effects, and the matters which the patient vomited 12 or 18 hours afterwards blackened the sheets and curtains of the bed, wherever it touched them. When brought to the hospital, June 23, the patient was insensible and there was insensibility of every part of the body; convulsive movements of the face and upper limbs; jaws firmly closed; eyes rolled up; pupils dilated and insensible to light. A solution of salt and water was freely given. After the lapse of an hour and a half, the pupils became less dilated, and the convulsions and closure of the jaws ceased. The salt water was continued for eight hours, when emollient drinks were substituted. At this period the insensibility was less profound, and the patient suffered from violent pains in the epigastrium. It was not, however, until eleven hours after his entrance that the general sensibility returned and the patient was able to speak. Some hours afterwards, profound coma, with insensibility returned and continued for two hours; and the next day, and the day after he had a similar attack. After this, convalescence proceeded uninterruptedly, and he was discharged well, June 29th. *Bulletin Générale de Thérap.* Sept. 1839.

46. *Deaths by Poison.*—A very interesting report made to the House of Commons at the instance of Sir Robert Inglis, has recently been published. It is enti-

* Davis's Operative Midwifery, page 98.

titled "Returns from the Coroners of England and Wales of all Inquisitions held by them during the years 1837 and 1838, in cases where death was found, by verdict of Jury, to have been caused by poison." These returns it must be premised are not complete, some coroners having neglected to comply, with the request of the Commons, and those who have complied having in many instances omitted particulars of great moment; notwithstanding these imperfections, the document is valuable, and the public not only of England, but of this country would be benefitted by its extended publication. We can give, only, a summary of the more interesting points.

The total number of deaths by poison, 1837-38 was 543, of which 261 were females, and 282 males.

The total number of individuals poisoned by opium, or its preparations, was 186.

The deaths of very young children (most of them at the breast), from opium, or its preparations, administered by mothers and nurses, in ignorance of the powerful effects of those substances on infants, were 52.

The deaths of young children from opium or laudanum administered in mistake for other medicine, were 20. In 11 of these cases, the names of the medicines are given, in the place of which opiates were given by mistake.

The very great number of deaths amongst children, resulting from overdoses of opium, or its preparations, and from doses thereof given in mistake for other medicines, cannot fail to excite attention. Deaths of this kind amount nearly to a seventh of the entire number of deaths by poison. The number was 72!

Most of the children poisoned in this way *lost their lives* owing to the ignorance, carelessness, or presumption of *their mothers*. It cannot be too generally known that narcotic and anodyne drugs, powerful though they be in the adult, act with infinitely greater energy upon the more sensitive nervous system of the infant; so that even experienced medical men never administer remedies of this class to the very young, without exerting the utmost caution and making the most accurate calculation. Two drops of laudanum have been known to kill an infant, nay, we heard of a case in which *one drop* stole away the life of a new born babe. It is evident that the practical inference to be deduced from the facts represented in the above table is—*that mothers and nurses should never dare to administer medicines of the narcotic kind, except under the immediate direction of the medical attendant.*

The Coroner of Nottingham states, that "Godfrey's Cordial is given to children to a great extent; and that he has no doubt whatever, that many infants are yearly destroyed in that borough, but who, dying off gradually, never come under his notice officially." There can be no doubt of the truth of this assertion. At all events we can say positively that such instances occur elsewhere. *Lond. Med. Gaz.* Nov. 1839.

47. *Excoriation round the Throat of a still-born Infant.*—Dr. E. KENNEDY exhibited to the Dublin Obstetrical Society, a still-born infant, with excoriation round the throat, of a dark red colour, and remarked how easily such a circumstance might be mistaken for the result of violence, were it not for the appearances presented by the chord.

ANIMAL CHEMISTRY.

48. *Sugar in the Blood and Urine of Diabetic Patients.*—It is stated in the *Journal de Chimie Médicale* for Dec. 1839, that M. MULLER, of Medebach, has succeeded in detecting sugar in the blood of a diabetic patient. From 12 ozs. of that fluid he obtained 1 drachm, 5 grs. of sugar; and from 50 ounces of urine from the same subject, he obtained as much as 2 ozs. 3 drachms and 37 grs.

49. *On the Composition of Milk.*—M. DONNE considers milk to consist of a fluid holding in solution caseum, a particular variety of sugar and salts, and in